

## Superfund Division

### TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

#### VARIOUS REMOVAL/REMEDIAL ISSUES

**Pawhuska High School Emergency Response:** On August 14, 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 (EPA) was notified of the evacuation of the Pawhuska High School, due to high levels of an explosive gas. EPA dispatched an On-Scene Coordinator and contractors to conduct an assessment of the situation. EPA held daily conference calls with and coordinated closely with an active work group of tribal, state, and federal officials to determine the appropriate course of action. EPA conducted air monitoring and air sampling to confirm indoor air levels were below EPA screening level for hazardous chemicals.

On August 21, 2017, EPA participated in a public meeting hosted by the Pawhuska Public Schools. The purpose of the meeting was to summarize the incident and response efforts, discuss plans to address the seeps at the geothermal well locations and oil and gas production wells, and address concerns posed by local residents.

To address elevated levels of methane occurring outside the school from geothermal wells, EPA made recommendations and even provided design options for an emergency ventilation system. Construction of this system required the Osage Nation Congress to reach an intergovernmental agreement between the Osage Nation and the State of Oklahoma. Once the agreement was reached, the emergency ventilation system was completed on August 28, 2017. Additionally, a historic gas well located on the softball field was plugged under the authority and jurisdiction of the Osage Minerals Council, with financial assistance from the Oklahoma Office of Emergency Management.

On October 2, 2017, at the request of the Pawhuska School Administration and other members of the workgroup (Osage Nation, Osage Mineral Council, Oklahoma Office of Energy & Environment, Oklahoma Corporation Commission, Oklahoma Water Resource Board, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Oklahoma Fire Marshall), the EPA team returned to the site to address concerns expressed by school officials that potentially contaminated soil was left on the softball field following the plugging of the gas well. EPA conducted extensive soil sampling across the softball field. Analytical results were received and the results were reviewed by an EPA toxicologist. The analytical results for metals, volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile compounds, and total petroleum hydrocarbons were either non-detect or were below U.S. EPA Regional Screening Levels. Additionally, the arsenic concentration range was consistent with the arsenic background level in Oklahoma soil, confirming the soils at the Pawhuska High School softball field are unlikely to cause harm to people utilizing this facility.

*Ronnie Crossland, 214-665-2721.*

**Jackpile-Paguate Uranium Mine Site:** On August 2, 2017, EPA, Atlantic Richfield, and the Pueblo of Laguna met at the former mine site area to kick off the scoping activities associated with conducting a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the site.

On September 6, 2017, an Open House was held at the Pueblo gymnasium so that the community could informally meet with the Superfund technical team members including other technical parties and institutions conducting research at the site. The Superfund technical team is continuing collaboration with Atlantic Richfield on planning documents before any field work begins at the site. Preliminary field activities are expected begin in early 2018. John Meyer 214-665-6742

**Quapaw Tribe:** The EPA continues to work closely with the Quapaw Tribe and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) in implementing the Tar Creek Superfund site remedy. Since the awarding of a Remedial Action Cooperative Agreement (CA) in FY2012 for the Catholic 40, the first-ever CA in the nation where a Tribe performed a Superfund remedial action on property that they own, the EPA has continued to award the Quapaw Tribe CAs for remedial actions at Beaver Creek North (CP060), Distal 7 North (Drainage Feature), Distal 10/12, and Distal 13. CAs with the Tribe for the Bird Dog chat base, and other areas of the site, are currently being discussed.

On April 18, 2017, the EPA's RPM provided a presentation at the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professions – Tribal Superfund Working Group Training in Quapaw, Oklahoma. The RPM discussed the EPA's experience working with the Quapaw Tribe on implementing the Site's remedial actions under cooperative agreements.

A Bench-Scale Study on the use of soil amendments, led by the EPA's Environmental Response Team, was recently completed at the Catholic 40 (Quapaw tribal trust land). The purpose of the study is to determine if soil amendments can reduce the bioavailability of cadmium, lead, and zinc. The successful use of soil amendments could reduce the amount of transition zone soils (i.e., native soils underneath chat piles/bases) which would otherwise be excavated and taken to a repository for final disposal. The Quapaw Tribe, with technical assistance from the EPA and the ODEQ, will be implementing long-term performance measures at the Catholic 40 and other distal areas to determine the effectiveness of the soil amendments in meeting the remedial action objectives specified in the 2008 Record of Decision for Operable Unit 4 (Source Material). The EPA, Quapaw Tribe, and the ODEQ are discussing additional options for reducing the amount of soils that are excavated from the Site and disposed at the central repository. *John Meyer, 214-665-6742*

## **AWARD FUNDING**

**Quapaw Tribe:** EPA has awarded two separate Cooperative Agreements regarding the remediation of distal areas in the Tar Creek Superfund Site:

- Tar Creek Distal 13 - \$ 286,569
- Tar Creek Distal 10 & 12 - \$4,896,088

*Tony Talton 214-665-7205*

**Tar Creek OU5:** Currently, the EPA in coordination with the tribes, states, and other federal agencies is conducting OU5 remedial investigation field sampling activities. Coordination efforts include the review and comment on the Data Gap Report, the review and development of the conceptual exposure model for the human health risk assessment, and the review and development of the field sample plan. Subsequent to the April 10, 2017, meeting to start the field event planning, efforts for the collection of data gaps included conference calls to discuss potential sample locations, tribal sample participation, and confirmation sample collection procedures. Field sampling began July 10, 2017, with scheduled activities through November 3, 2017. Throughout the field sampling event, updates and summaries of progress have been provided along with additional requests for assistance in field location and collection. The next stakeholder update meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2017, and will focus on field sample accomplishments and human health exposure parameters that will be used in the human health risk assessment. The EPA will continue to coordinate with the tribes interested in the Tar Creek Site through periodic meetings and conference calls. John Meyer, 214-665-6742

**Wilcox Oil Company:** An availability session will be held on November 2, 2017. The session is open to all interested in the site and the ongoing field event. On July 26, 2017, EPA presented at the annual Inter-Tribal Environmental Council (ITEC) conference on the present site conditions and upcoming activities. The last open house was held on April 13, 2017, and provided an update on current site activities. The EPA and ODEQ continue to coordinate with the tribal groups interested in the Wilcox Site. The ITEC, Sac and Fox Nation, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Cherokee Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Indian Health Service participate in the site meetings and visits. Since finalizing the site Sample and Analysis Plan, EPA completed four field events, the most recent being in April 2017, and is currently conducting field event five which started on October 16 and is scheduled through November 8, 2017. John Meyer, 214-665-6742

**Oklahoma Refining Company Superfund Site, Cyril, Oklahoma – Coordination/Meeting with the City of Cyril and Inter-Tribal Environmental Council:** On April 18, 2017, EPA Region 6, along with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) met with the Mayor of Cyril and the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council (ITEC) concerning the status of the remedial activities being performed at the Oklahoma Refining Company Superfund Site located in Cyril, Oklahoma. EPA and ODEQ met with ITEC in the morning and with the Mayor of Cyril in the afternoon hours. Recent improvements to on-site drainage were discussed with the Mayor in addition to various site maintenance issues. Recent sampling activities conducted in Gladys Creek were discussed with ITEC. John Meyer, 214-665-6742

**New Mexico Abandoned Uranium Mines:** Investigations into the impacts on groundwater from legacy uranium mining and milling are continuing. The Phase 1 Ground Water Investigation was released to stakeholders and the public in September 2016. The Phase 2 Ground Water Investigation will be released in early 2018. EPA will schedule community meetings once the report is released to give a summary of the findings and answer questions.

The Ambrosia Lake non-time critical removal assessments are also continuing. Field work in the western and eastern areas of Ambrosia Lake has been completed and the central area will be completed in early 2018. The data is being utilized to prepare Engineering Evaluation/Cost

Analysis (EE/CA) Reports for these areas. This work is being funded by proceeds from the Tronox Settlement.

The Johnny M Mine Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis will be released to the public for a 30-day public comment period in the fall of 2017. The report identifies alternatives that were evaluated to address mine waste at the Site and identifies a preferred alternative.

Coordination meetings are held on a regular basis with Region 6, Region 9, Navajo Nation, NMED, and NMEMNRD to discuss priorities for current and future removal work in the legacy uranium mines under the Tronox settlement. The most recent meetings were held on October 25-26, 2017. *Ben Banipal, 214-665-7324, John Meyer, 214-665-6742, Ronnie Crossland, 214-665-2721*

## **BROWNFIELDS**

### **128a Tribal Response Program Updates:**

- The **Funding Request Guidance** for Brownfields 128a programs was published in the Federal Register September 25, 2017. Funding Requests are due to Amber Howard ([howard.amber@epa.gov](mailto:howard.amber@epa.gov)) by no later than December 15, 2017. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*
- The **National Brownfields Conference** will be held in Pittsburgh, PA December 5-7, 2017. For more information, including registration and hotel information, visit [www.brownfields2017.org](http://www.brownfields2017.org). *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*
- **ENIPC** – The Eight Northern Indian Pueblo Council will be hosting an ASTM Phase I training in Santa Ana Pueblo December 11-13, 2017. Space is limited. For more information, contact Margaret Chavez. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*
- **Absentee Shawnee Tribe** – The Absentee Shawnee Tribe (AST), in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, has completed the Phase II assessment on the Rodeside Motel site. AST is currently evaluating cleanup options for the property. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*
- **The Choctaw Nation and Muskogee-Creek Nation** have begun establishing their 128a programs. These programs are among the newest 128a recipients, having received their first allocation for FY18. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*

### **Brownfields Cleanup Grant – Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma Update:**

The Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma was selected to receive Brownfields Cleanup grant funding in the FY 2017 Brownfields grant competition. EPA Region 6 awarded the \$200,000 Brownfields Cleanup grant to Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma to cleanup up the asbestos and lead-based paint in the heritage Kickapoo gymnasium effective October 1, 2017. Based upon kick-off Brownfields Cleanup grant meeting in Kickapoo Tribal Offices in September 2017, confirmation sampling for asbestos and lead-based paint was identified as a priority before cleanup activities can begin. EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment offered to provide confirmatory sampling assistance to

Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, and the Tribe accepted offer of assistance. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*

### **TARGETED BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES**

**Santa Clara Pueblo:** The Phase I ESA site visit of the Bridge Radiator Shop in Espanola, NM was completed on October 5, 2017, on behalf of the Santa Clara Pueblo. Final Phase I ESA report will be completed by October 2017. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*

**Cochiti Pueblo:** The Sustainable Reuse Options for Cochiti's gravel mine was completed in August 2017. The Kansas State University (KSU) – Technical Assistance to Tribal Brownfields will provide additional visioning/planning assistance to Cochiti Pueblo to refine reuse plans for gravel mine. The KSU assistance includes technical assistance from the University of New Mexico (UNM), Architecture School's Indigenous. The KSU and UNM met with Cochiti Pueblo point of contact and EPA Region 6 on October 25, 2017 to begin efforts to assist Cochiti Pueblo refine reuse plan for gravel mine. The Phase III ESA to develop cleanup/stabilization plan for Cochiti's gravel mine work assignment will be awarded to a DBE contractor by December 2017. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*

**Acoma Pueblo:** The Acoma Pueblo requested a Phase II ESA for the closed building (the building construction was funded by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration) generally referred to as the "EDA Building" in Acomita Village in October 2017. Also, the Acoma Pueblo requested New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Brownfields Program to provide a Phase I and II ESA for the Acomita School complex in October 2017. A meeting with Acoma Pueblo, EPA Region 6, and the Office of Community Revitalization was held on October 25, 2017, to discuss assistance with the brownfields properties in Acomita Village that included the EDA Building, the Acomita School, and the closed gas station/convenience store. Additional discussions included Acoma Pueblo's interest in competing for Brownfields Cleanup grant funding for the closed gas station/convenience store and closed solid waste transfer station FY 2019/2010; and technical assistance available through the KSU/UNM technical assistance for tribal brownfields sites. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*

**Laguna Pueblo:** The Laguna Pueblo requested environmental site assessment assistance on Laguna Industries – a former electric circuit board manufacturing operation from NMED Brownfields Program. The Laguna Industries was evaluated by Superfund Site Assessment in the early 1990s, and a Phase I ESA was completed for this site by the Northwest New Mexico Council of Government (NWNMCOG) Brownfields Program in 2011. Currently, the Laguna Pueblo's Police staff occupy office space at the Laguna Industries site. A meeting between Laguna Pueblo Environmental, NMED Brownfields Program, EPA Region 6 (Brownfields and Superfund Site Assessment staff) and Eight Northern Pueblo Council (ENIPC) Brownfields Program was held at Laguna Pueblo on October 24, 2017, to discuss strategy on how to undertake preliminary sampling to confirm presence of suspected contaminants. NMED Brownfields, EPA Region 6 (Brownfields and Superfund Site Assessment) and Laguna Pueblo will continue to coordinate sampling efforts. *Tony Talton, 214-665-7205*

## **TRAINING**

**Tribal Environmental Lands Forum:** Superfund Site Assessment staff provided a breakout session regarding “Updates for the Grants Mining District” at the Tribal Lands Environmental Forum held in Tulsa, Oklahoma in August 2017. *Ben Banipal, 214-665-7324*

**Radiation Risk Assessment Training:** Superfund Risk Assessor provided Radiation Risk Assessment Training in Dallas on October 4. *Ben Banipal, 214-665-7324*